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ABSTRACT

This comparative study explored community influences on leadership and educational reform in representative school districts located in low socioeconomic class, culturally diverse communities. The study compared outcomes of one state's efforts to educate disabled preschool children (ages 3-5) in school districts in low socioeconomic settings with early childhood education efforts in a suburban, affluent community. Five school districts were selected, representing one suburban affluent setting and four economically disadvantaged settings: urban poverty, small town, low-income rural area, and Native American Indian reservation. One 3-year-old child with disabilities was selected in each school district. Findings are discussed in terms of educational practices; family and community characteristics; and the impact of class and culture on principal involvement, expectations for achievement, goal consensus, teacher recruitment and retention, teacher supervision and assistance, and collaboration. The findings demonstrated that the outcomes of a state reform effort with intentions of meeting the needs of young children with disabilities in all school districts were quite different between affluent and economically disadvantaged settings and between urban and nonurban settings. Cultural differences were not clearly dichotomous, and instead presented themselves along a continuum from affluent, to urban poverty, to small town, to rural, and to Native American community. Includes 56 references. (JDD)

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Exploring community influences on leadership and reform: A micro-level and macro-level analysis of poverty and culture

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Abstract

The purpose of this comparative study was to explore community influences on leadership and educational reform in representative school districts located in low socioeconomic class (SES), culturally diverse communities. The study specifically examined the impact of one state's mandated efforts to educate preschool children (ages 3-5) with disabilities. The findings were then compared to the outcomes of early childhood education efforts in a suburban, affluent community. The findings demonstrated that the outcomes of a state reform effort with intentions of meeting the needs of young children with disabilities in all school districts were quite different in affluent and economically disadvantaged and between urban and nonurban settings. One interpretation of the effective schools research was utilized to analyze the findings and to demonstrate how the characteristics of class and culture, in interactive ways, complicated the effective schools linkages leading to student learning.

Exploring community influences on leadership and reform:

A micro/macro level analysis of poverty and culture

Persons in the field of educational administration can no longer ignore the connections between current and changing demographic trends and efforts to provide quality education for all students. The increasingly diverse student population includes students with disabilities (Stainback, Stainback, & Forest, 1989), students from economically poor families (Hodgkinson, 1988), students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds (Pallas, Natriello, McDill, 1989), and other underrepresented populations (including young women, school age parents, gay and lesbian students [Rofes, 1989]).

Recent research on achievement for diverse student populations such as persons of color and women (Cole & Griffin, 1987), has targeted the salience of classroom, school, and community context in education (Metz, 1989; Oakes, 1989). Scholars in educational administration have acknowledged the neglect of contextual considerations in the field of educational administration (Foster, 1986; Yeaky, 1989), and a few researchers have noted the significance of context in the effective schools research (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986; Wimpelberg, Teddlie, & Stringfield, 1989). However, few scholars have examined the link of community context to school leader behavior, and, in turn, student learning (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982).

The purpose of this comparative study was to explore community influences on leadership and educational reform in representative school districts located in low socioeconomic class (SES), culturally diverse communities. The study specifically examined the impact of one state's mandated efforts to educate preschool children (ages 3-5) with disabilities. The findings were

then compared to the outcomes of early childhood education efforts in a suburban, affluent community. The findings demonstrated that the outcomes of a state reform effort with intentions of meeting the needs of young children with disabilities in all school districts were quite different in affluent and economically disadvantaged and between urban and nonurban settings. One interpretation of the effective schools research was utilized to analyze the findings and to demonstrate how the characteristics of class and culture, in interactive ways, complicated the effective schools linkages leading to student learning.

The central questions which guided the collection of data and analysis were

1. How does early childhood reform for children with disabilities compare in these communities at the individual child level and district level?
2. What aspects in the child's family and community setting hinder or facilitate reform efforts?
3. How do the community characteristics of class and culture complicate effective school linkages among the community, school leadership, and the learner?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework which guided the data collection and analysis for the study was grounded in a combination of two frameworks: one, a model characterizing the relationships between the principal, teacher, and learner identified in the effective schools research, and two, a framework organized around concepts in anthropology and sociology that seek to explain the contexts of children's development. I selected this combination of frameworks because of their utility in integrating and extending what we know both about

the context of organizational behavior at the macrolevel, and the interaction of social systems and their influence on children at the microlevel.

The first conceptual framework underpinning the study is based on a synthesis of the effective schools research as outlined in the school success model developed by Rosenholtz (1985). Rosenholtz posits that the degree of principal certainty concerning the possibilities of student achievement and the abilities of teachers to "make a difference" determines school goals and guides principal action in recruiting, supporting engaged time, monitoring teacher activity, and providing assistance. These leader actions promote socialization of school expectations for teachers and students and shapes the amount of teacher collaboration and decision-making. In turn, teacher interaction can influence the degree of teacher certainty of pedagogical skills to effect student change, which increases the likelihood of student success. Finally, student success is a powerful motivator, and supports and sustains teacher contributions to the learning process (see Figure 1).

Insert Figure 1 about here

In other words, Rosenholtz assumes that principal attitudes and behaviors are the catalyst for initiating the actions leading to student success. In terms of expectations for achievement, Rosenholtz asserts that "effective principals convey certainty that teachers can improve student performance and that students themselves are capable of learning" (1985, p. 360). Ineffective

principals are not sure that "changes in student performance can actually be brought about" (p. 360).

Interwoven with high expectations for achievement is the importance of developing a school consensus that achievement is the primary goal. In her research, Rosenholtz found less effective schools exhibited greater goal displacement in that "the goal of order displace[d] academic achievement." Rosenholtz infers that "the effective school. . . relies almost exclusively on its organizational goals as incentives to attract and retain teachers" (p. 358).

Recruiting personnel who share similar values increases the likelihood for goal consensus. According to Rosenholtz, "if principals fail in their efforts to attract good teachers and keep them, they become trapped in a cycle of high turnover and low school productivity" (1985, p. 362). In the same vein, Rosenholtz views retention as important: ". . . teachers' adoption of norms and goals occurs over time. The longer individuals work within a school, the greater their potential for interaction and hence the more consensual their reality of school life. . . . Staff stability, then, is a necessary condition for continuous collegial exchange and, therefore, for the development of consensus about school life" (p. 366-367).

Rosenholtz extensively discussed the importance of teachers experiencing a balance between contributions to and inducements from the teaching process, and that the inducements for teaching have to be as great or greater than contributions. Inducements are construed as originating within the school. Rosenholtz explains that "teachers who threaten the exchange between inducements and contributions in effective schools meet with strong

organizational resistance. They may be isolated from their professional group. . . they may suffer a reduction in resource allocation, or in extreme cases, they may be targeted for removal. . ." (Rosenholtz, 1985, p. 362-3). According to Rosenholtz, the end result of this contribution/inducement imbalance is job dismissal or the teacher withholding service.

Rosenholtz emphasizes the importance and role of supervision and staff development in effective schools:

> In addition to teachers' professional development, active monitoring in the effective school serves several vital functions. First, it serves as a continuous academic signal to organizational participants about the priorities of the school and the importance of their individual contributions in achieving them. Second, it provides a clear basis for organizational decision making within the school. Third, it establishes standards for knowing when goal attainment has been reached. Fourth, it informs all who work within the school precisely what constitutes acceptable performance (p. 369).

Finally, teacher collaboration and group cohesiveness is of paramount importance in effective schools, and affects all the other components for school success, including expectations, goal consensus, recruitment and supervision. The norms of continuous improvement or staff development are buttressed by staff interaction and opportunities for team planning. Teachers can improve on their teaching and form a consensus on the requirements for quality teaching. Rosenholtz asserted: "Where teachers are cut off from

their colleagues for major portions of the day, the effects are profound. First, there is little opportunity to develop collectively held notions about what is important to emphasize in teaching, and about how success should be gauged . . . (p. 364). . . . Frequent conversation about instructional practices and how to improve them, . . . increases the likelihood that student achievement will be viewed as a highly salient aspect of school life" (p. 366).

My second framework is rooted in the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Cazden and Mehan (1989). These individuals view the child's development in relation to his or her environment. According to Bronfenbrenner, the child functions within several microsystems (such as home activities, and school experiences) with all of these microsystems constituting a mesosystem within which there are interrelationships (Ratajczak, 1989). It is the interrelationships among these systems or "nested" contexts that are most important.

Cazden and Mehan (1989) incorporated principles from Bronfenbrenner to identify issues when teaching culturally diverse students. They examined the immediate task context, the language and culture of the classroom, classroom grouping practices, and relationships with home and community. Cazden and Mehan's (1989) model applied Bronfenbrenner's work to an approach that "represent[s] the embedded contexts encountered when a student confronts a task as concentric circles of reciprocal influence" (p. 48). They used this conceptualization, adapted from the work of Cole and Griffin (1987), to interpret the meaning context has on student-teacher interaction (see Figure 2).

Insert Figure 2 about here

In summary, this study sought to explore how the community characteristics of class and culture influenced leadership behaviors and attitudes incorporated in the effective schools research and school success model developed by Rosenholtz (1985). Leadership behavior and attitudes were defined to include principal leadership and "other than principal" leadership (Burlingame, 1987) in the domains of principal involvement, expectations for achievement, goal consensus, recruitment and retention, supervision, and collaboration. This leadership was analyzed in the context of early childhood reform for children with disabilities.

For purposes of this study, the microlevel is construed as the child's experiences in the classroom or the outcomes of reform at the child level. The microlevel also may include aspects in the classroom context which cannot be easily separated from individual activities, but which may shape the child's school day (for example, a classroom bulletin board display). The macrolevel of this study refers to the group or organizational level. In concert with Bronfenbrenner's usage, the microlevel is the core of the model and the macrolevel is the school, district, and community context.

METHODOLOGY

Design

A multi-site (Firestone & Herriott, 1984), multi-level (Sirotnik & Burstein, 1985) qualitative research design guided the inquiry in both data

collection and analysis. Interviews (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973) and participant observation (Spradley, 1980) were the primary methods of collecting data, supplemented by demographic data questionnaires and document analysis. While survey research would have yielded quantitative measures pertaining to compliance or existing programs, such a method would fail to extend our understanding of where, why, or how certain processes occur (Mallory, 1980). Also, the provision of services may not always link to activities of the child in the classroom (Bodgan & Taylor, 1976). Qualitative methods are also most appropriate when asking "how" or "why" questions, when examining a problem or issue within its real-live context (Lecompte & Goetz, 1985), and when determining the current status of a situation (Yin, 1984)--all of which were major objectives of the study.

Participants

Five school districts were selected from a midwestern state. The school districts represented suburban affluent (for comparative data) and four economically disadvantaged settings: urban poverty, small town, a low income rural area, and a Native American Indian reservation. The state and school district selection were based on basic principles of multisite policy research (Firestone & Herriott, 1984), criteria for selecting a social situation to conduct participant-observation (Spradley, 1980), and on the location of public school preschool programs for students with disabilities. The nonurban school districts were selected based on Helge's (1984) definition of rural: "A district is considered rural when the number of inhabitants is fewer than 150 per square mile or when located in counties with 60% or more of the population living in communities no larger than 5,000 inhabitants. Districts

with more than 10,000 students and those within a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA), as determined by the U.S. Census Bureau, are not considered rural" (p. 209). "Disadvantaged" districts were also determined by the percentage of unemployed individuals, of families below the poverty line, and of minorities; median educational level, average family income, and the percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunches relative to other districts in the state.

Community culture was primarily defined as the differences between urban and nonurban cultures. Cultural differences between these communities was then defined by community location, race, and the occupation ranking of the majority of residents. The urban culture was divided into two distinct cultures: (a) urban, black, working class, and (b) suburban, white, white collar. The nonurban cultures were divided into three distinct cultures: small town, white, semi-skilled; rural, white, working class; and rural, Native American, unemployed. The districts were identified as follows: Lakeview (suburban, affluent), and Dover (urban, poverty) were the urban sites. Prairieville (small town), Green Hills (rural), and Deerfield (Native American) were identified as the nonurban sites (see Table 1).

Insert Table 1 about here

One three-year-old (3.0-3.5) child with disabilities who attended a public school, preschool education program was selected by purposive sampling in each of the districts. Three-year-old children were selected to facilitate a possible longitudinal study of these same children over the course of their

ECE experiences. The criteria for selection was based on SES and learning need. In the economically disadvantaged districts, the child was from a low socioeconomic class family, and in the affluent district, the child was from an affluent family. Socioeconomic class was determined by income relative to the state average, and to national and state poverty lines. Among the low SES children attending the program in the economically disadvantaged districts and the high SES children attending the program in the affluent district, the children with disabilities were also the lowest functioning preschool students currently attending school--based on evaluation data in the student's file. This level of student functioning was targeted for two main reasons. First, research has shown that all schools, particularly rural and low income districts, have great difficulty providing a meaningful school experience for these students (Office of Special Education & Rehabilitation Services, 1989). Second, because of advances in medical technology, more and more babies with complex medical needs are surviving, and their incidence is widely expected to be on the rise in public schools (see Table 2).

Insert Table 2 about here

Procedures

To address the research questions, data collection procedures included interviews, student observations, and document gathering. The districts were visited five times over the course of one semester during the 1988-89 school year.

To answer the first research question which examined early childhood reform at the individual child level, the students were observed throughout five school days over the course of a semester using continuous observation of activities with the Student Observation Instrument (SOI). The role of the researchers was one of passive participation; i.e., we were present but did not actively participate. Teacher lesson plans, student records, and classroom record keeping such as schedules and student goals supplemented the observations. Each child's family, teacher, aide, and therapists were formally and informally interviewed for further corroborative data.

As regards the second research question, aspects in the child's family and community setting which hinder or facilitate reform efforts were ascertained by formally interviewing community persons and community early childhood education providers--one each purposively selected in the categories of day care providers, Head Start directors, coordinators for early intervention, community pastors, community agency directors (e.g., health and human services), government officials (mayor or town chairperson), and a prominent business owner or chief executive officer. Interviews were also formally conducted with school personnel, including the principal, superintendent, school board members, special education administrators and supervisors, the principal of the child's school, program support teachers, the classroom teacher, and the teacher aide. General education teachers in related programs (e.g., prekindergarten, kindergarten, first grade, Chapter I) were informally interviewed. Community documents such as newspapers, tourist information, and phone books were also collected. Specific demographic information was obtained through the local library in each community.

Early childhood education at the district level was determined by interviews conducted with the school personnel previously identified. To ascertain the educational context of these programs, interview data and related documents were collected on services for both children with and without disabilities from birth through five years of age. District records including annual district plans mandated by the state were also gathered.

To explore how community class and culture affect the effective school linkages among the community, school leadership, and the learner--the third and final research question--related questions were asked in all the previously identified interviews.

Instrumentation

Data recording instruments included interview protocols, the Student Observation Instrument (SOI), and demographic data questionnaires. The interview protocol consisted of key questions aimed at the study's organizing questions, but throughout the researchers sought to approximate conversation (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973), rather than follow a step-by-step interview protocol. Consonant with the conceptual framework, specific question domains included entry, early childhood education, family, community, and effective school linkages (such as principal involvement and student expectations) and exit questions.

The SOI was validated in previous field studies (Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1989; Capper, 1990; Rowan & Guthrie, 1985) and was developed from suggestions found in previous research concerning the utilization of qualitative methods in research with students with severe disabilities (Bogdan & Taylor, 1976; Edgerton, 1984), program evaluation methods for the mentally

retarded (Barton, Bruelle, & Repp, 1982); principles of observing academic learning time in special education classrooms (Wilson, 1987); and suggestions for focused observations in anthropology and sociology (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973; Spradley, 1980). The SOI included the start time of the activity, observation notes, instructional materials, methodological notes, theoretical notes, and general notes. The domain cues for the observation notes included the skill(s) being targeted, activity objective, person responsible for the teaching, adult/child ratio and groupings, developmental and chronological age ranges, and opportunities for, and descriptions of choicemaking, socialization/interaction, and communication. The domains were selected because of their documented importance in early childhood intervention for children with disabilities (Bailey & Simeonsson, 1985; Halle, 1987; Karweit, 1989; Linder, 1983; Phlegar, 1987; Safford, 1989; Strain, 1983).

Demographic data was gathered concerning the child, classroom, school, and community. A checklist for archival records and documentation (Murphy, 1980) was also utilized.

Analysis

To answer each of the study's questions, the four stages of the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) as applied to single, cross-site, (Barton & Lazarsfeld, 1969), and multi-level (Sirotnik & Burnstein, 1985) analysis was utilized. Cross-site comparisons were made according to class (low SES and high SES) and culture (urban and nonurban). Comparisons were also made among the nonurban sites. Quantitative analysis were used to determine duration and frequency of student activities which were calculated into percentages of the school day.

FINDINGS

Early Childhood Education at the District and Child Level

All the school districts (affluent and poor) responded similarly to the state early childhood education mandate. They operate "programs" for preschool students with disabilities and all possess structural similarities. That is, the programs include a certified teacher, a teacher aide, specialized materials, related services (e.g., speech therapy), a separate classroom space for conducting learning activities, and specific procedures and processes to provide services to children--including screenings, evaluations, and individualized education programs.

Although ECE was programmatically similar across the districts, there were striking differences between the programs regarding the relationship between policy compliance and program quality at the child level. When the law was first mandated, the initial emphasis in all the districts was compliance. Lakeview, however, was able to move beyond compliance and institute "state-of-the-art" practices in its programs. In Dover, the special education director expressed great pride in the fact he had brought the district into state compliance, which was his top priority. Prior to his tenure as director, the district had been cited for numerous special education violations. The district was just beginning to consider program quality. The districts in the nonurban, low SES communities, however, struggled to maintain policy compliance in their services. Particularly in Green Hills and Deerfield, conducting required evaluations, completing reports, and obtaining parent consent and participation--all within a specified time frame--left little time and energy for program quality efforts.

At the child level, like their peer with disabilities in Lakeview, the low SES children were provided with a daily routine of preschool activities. The days of both the poor and affluent children included time for speech therapy, toilet training, a snack or meal, and playtime. Like their Lakeview counterpart, all of their classmates had disabilities, and they had very little contact with similar-aged peers without disabilities. Regardless of the socioeconomic status of the family or school district, the students' classrooms had a very low student/staff ratio.

The poor children with disabilities, however, spent considerably less time in the preschool day and week (13.3 hours per week) than the Lakeview peer (29.2 hours per week). The poor children spent the largest percentage of the week playing (27.6%), while the Lakeview peer with similar learning needs consistently spent more time in one-to-one or small group instruction and in such individual therapies as speech, occupational, and physical therapy (25.7%).

The days for students in the low SES settings were common, with students spending the entire day in a classroom located in the wing of a building or in a setting physically isolated from other elementary students, and saw one or two other school professionals for instruction (speech therapy or physical education). The most obvious differences in the poor students' days were in the Green Hills and Deerfield districts, as compared to Lakeview. In Green Hills and Deerfield, the coordination of activities to teach the students independence and interdependence was minimal. Most of the activities were isolated entities with no carry-over and practice of needed skills. For example, although the students required extensive practice and training in

communication and self-help skills, snack or meal times were completed in near total silence, staff persons sometimes fed the students even though they could perform this task independently, few opportunities were provided for choice-making, and the clean-up was done for them.

The school days in the other low SES districts, Dover and Prairieville, provided more educational opportunities than Green Hills and Deerfield, but were also qualitatively different than Lakeview. Classroom activities were more structured to accomplish individual student goals, and students were required to be more independent than in Green Hills or Deerfield.

In contrast, the student at Lakeview attended a classroom centrally located in an elementary school. Over the course of a week, scheduled time with many other teachers or related service providers (e.g., art, music, library, physical therapy) provided the student with ample opportunities to learn how to find other rooms, to reinforce specific skills he was learning in other settings, and to work with other persons--all in preparation for entry into kindergarten or first grade. Every activity had a definite purpose, was tightly linked with student goals, and included alternatives for making choices. The teacher continually capitalized on naturally occurring opportunities to practice skills for cognitive and independent growth. For example, at lunch time, the student not only ate lunch with the assistance of the occupational therapist in order to learn to chew appropriately, but also counted napkins while setting the table, chose the color of cup and the kind of drink he wanted, poured his own milk, requested more food (with the support of the speech therapist) using a combination of sign language and voice, and cleaned up his own eating area with assistance.

Family and Community Characteristics

Across all settings, poor and affluent alike, the families of students with disabilities were sincerely interested in their child's education and were willing to support their child's learning as much as they felt they reasonably could. Rather than cultural differences, family involvement was more clearly demarcated between the low and high SES communities.

The families of the low SES students with disabilities were uninvolved in the child's school day. In contrast, a mother of a Lakeview student actively participated in the school day by attending the classroom biweekly with other parents to teach students and to meet afterwards for sharing. She also participated in a biweekly speech therapy session and worked along with the therapist on various techniques and strategies. The most significant family characteristic which challenged early childhood education for poor children was that the families of these children were "survival" families, as termed by a community worker. That is, although these families (three of whom were single parents) desired an education for their child, their daily lives were consumed by trying to provide the very basics of survival for their children, including food, clothing, and shelter. Lack of time and energy prevented them from meeting the expectations of school staff to participate more in their child's program.

Persons in both the low SES and Lakeview communities agreed that children with disabilities should receive services. A community characteristic which challenged early childhood efforts across all communities, poor and affluent, was the absence of a central coordinating council or agency responsible for information referrals on the full range of community services available for

these children and their families. Community characteristics in the low SES settings which hindered reform paralleled the experiences of the poor families. A myriad of community problems including alcoholism, drug abuse, unemployment, and the great need for social services competed with early childhood education needs.

Effective School Linkages: The Impact of Class and Culture

Principal Involvement. Regardless of class or culture, the principals in all these settings were almost totally uninvolved in the ECE programs. The supervision and coordination of ECE services at the building level was sometimes delegated to other persons in the district. For example, the principal at Lakeview resisted the centrally located placement of the ECE program at her school, delegating the supervision responsibility to a program support teacher who also served as an assistant principal. The assistant principal admitted, however, that he had relatively few contacts with the day-to-day operation of the classrooms, and that a district-based special education supervisor was the primary resource person.

In Dover, the teachers had no contact with a building-based principal. The four ECE classrooms for children with severe learning needs were located in a wing of the administration building. A program support teacher assumed a primary role in staff support. Although located in the wing of an elementary school, the Green Hills and Prairieville principals also had very little contact with the classroom. Both programs were financed primarily by a regional educational service agency, which also provided a program support teacher for consultation. The program support teacher who assisted the ECE teachers, however, was responsible for a number of different classrooms in a

geographically large, rural area, making it impossible for her to provide adequate support, both in terms of quantity and quality that was needed, especially by the first year teacher in Green Hills. Finally, both the principal and the special education administration staff had very little involvement with the program in Deerfield. The classroom was located in a modular unit outside of the elementary school.

Expectations for Achievement. The principals in this study were so uninvolved in ECE services that it was difficult to determine their expectations for student achievement, much less if they believed that teachers in these programs could make a difference. Teacher perceptions of principal expectations, however, did not differ in terms of class or culture. The ECE teachers in all the districts perceived that the principals had low or inappropriate expectations for the students. One teacher thought the principal viewed her classroom as a baby sitting service. Another teacher felt the administration perceived the program as providing "a little extra help" for children who were "behind in their learning," yet the classroom primarily served children with severe disabilities. One principal could not understand why the children were not learning to read and write, when, according to the teacher, these children were just learning how to say their name, to identify pictures, and to acquire independent self-care skills.

A class difference in expectations for student achievement occurred at the district and community level. Very high expectations for student achievement radiated from the community in Lakeview, and were part of a reciprocal, influential exchange with the superintendent's goal of high student achievement for all students, with and without disabilities.

Goal Consensus. Even if school principals had been more closely associated with the ECE programs and had held expectations for student achievement congruent with the students' special learning needs, the impact of poverty and culture would have made consensus on goals of academic achievement very difficult. For as found in this study, both class and culture were major factors in shaping the achievement goals across the districts.

Poverty, its consummate effects on the community and school district, and the resulting complexity of social and academic needs of the students, resulted in multiple school and classroom goals with no consensus on priorities. In the low SES districts, the teachers were required not only to develop instruction for students to attain individual education goals, but also had to be sure the children's faces and hands were washed after arriving at school, that they had appropriate clothing to wear, and that health needs were addressed (such as finding glasses for a student and checking for signs of child abuse).

Attending to academic and social needs to accommodate cultural diversity further fragmented school goals directed solely towards academic achievement. The administrators and teachers in Prairieville, Green Hills and Deerfield acknowledged the press of culture in their districts and attempted to meet not only goals of academic achievement, but also to provide for the cultural needs of their students. For example, Deerfield employed Native American language teachers to teach the native language to the elementary children. Special Native American holidays were also recognized in addition to the traditional school holidays in which children were dismissed from classes. While the Prairieville and Green Hills districts recognized the need to prepare

graduates for college entrance, the reality was that many students planned to be employed as local factory workers or farmers following graduation. Thus, district resources were channeled to create a highly successful vocational and agricultural education program at the high school. At the ECE classroom level, the classroom decor in Deerfield reflected the Native American culture with its art work and projects. In Prairieville and Green Hills, the curricula included content related to the farming communities.

In Dover, the superintendent's primary commitment was to school improvement based on the effective schools model, but he chose to ignore the cultural needs of the growing minority population and racial unrest both in the schools and in the community. Despite the much publicized racial tension, for example, school was held without ceremony on Martin Luther King Day. At the classroom level, instances of ignoring cultural needs included the use of inappropriate curriculum materials for students. For example, the target student who was black and from a single parent family was asked to name pictures in speech therapy, which depicted white, middle class, two parent families, engaged in social activities unfamiliar to this child. The Dover classroom decor showed no signs of cultural relevance for its minority class members.

In contrast, Lakeview was characterized by community and cultural needs which were significantly less poignant. The school and ECE classroom teacher did not have to attend to basic health care needs and the narrow academic focus prevented the integration of diversity into the curricula.

Principal Action: Recruitment and Retention. The differences in re.ruitment and retention in the districts were inconsistent in terms of class

and culture. Prairieville, Deerfield, and Lakeview had no problems with teacher recruitment and retention. In comparison, Green Hills and Dover had higher rates of teacher turnover. Administrators (both principals and superintendents) in Prairieville, Green Hills, and Lakeview enjoyed long tenures. In contrast, superintendents in Dover left their positions at an average rate of every three years. Deerfield experienced the most disruption in administrator turnovers, which included the positions of superintendent, high school principal, elementary principal, and special education administrator, with an average retention rate of two years.

Principal Action: Supervision and Assistance. Supervision practices were similar in all the districts regardless of class or culture in that supporting engaged time and monitoring teacher activity were both virtually non-existent in all the ECE classrooms owing to the uninvolvement of principals. While the program support teachers were designated for some supervision, union contracts precluded them from participating in more formal evaluation and supervision. The director of special education in all the districts was primarily responsible for the supervision and evaluation of these ECE teachers, but other administrative responsibilities prevented them from systematic supervising and monitoring.

Rosenholtz (1985) found that effective schools exemplified norms and opportunities for continuous improvement for teachers. Differences in staff development were most distinct between Lakeview and the low SES communities. Staff development did not differ in terms of culture. In all the economically disadvantaged districts, teacher input was not considered in staff development planning and the teachers cited many examples of staff training which was

inappropriate both in terms of quality and quantity. For example, one teacher noted that ". . . they [administrators] will provide one or two [inservices]. . . you know, things that they consider special ed that really has nothing to do with us. You know, it's like 'Teaching Reading to Special Populations' and that sort of thing, and I think, well, gee, that was really on my agenda to do for the day. You know [laughs], let's teach them how to read. I can hold up pictures of food and they can't name them. I'm sure they're ready to read the word. . . . " Lakeview in contrast provided many more staff development opportunities based on teacher input and geared specifically to the needs of the ECE teachers.

Collaboration. Some collaboration differences existed between the high and low SES communities. The most distinct differences in collaboration, however, occurred between the urban and nonurban cultures. The four Lakeview ECE teachers collaborated with each other, with related service personnel, and with general education teachers. The teachers were all located in one school and in adjacent classrooms. The related services personnel regularly worked in the classroom with the students (as opposed to pull-out therapy) and techniques for instruction and therapy were shared between the staff. In Dover, the program support teacher planned regular staff meetings with the ECE teachers to share ideas and to cooperatively plan programs. Although less so than in Lakeview, the three ECE teachers located in the same building sometimes planned joint activities for their students. Students were usually pulled-out of the classroom for therapy, although therapists occasionally conducted group therapy in the classroom. In contrast, Prairieville, Green Hills, and Deerfield teachers were the only ECE teachers in their school, and

did not ever meet with other ECE teachers in their district or region. Related services personnel provided therapies primarily outside of the classroom.

A second layer of cultural differences in collaboration took place between Prairieville and those in Green Hills and Deerfield. The teachers in Green Hills and Deerfield rarely interacted with the general education staff on teaching matters. The classrooms were more removed from the general education setting and the students were not integrated into the general education program. The Prairieville ECE classroom was located in closer proximity to other early elementary classrooms. Thus, there were more opportunities for interaction with general education teachers. Also, similar to Lakeview, Prairieville's ECE students had contact with some general education personnel. For example, students had "library" once a week with the school librarian, and the students occasionally shared media presentations with the kindergarten classroom.

DISCUSSION

These findings strongly indicate that the community characteristics of class and culture markedly influence leadership and ECE reform (summarized in Tables 3 and 4). With that evidentiary foundation, the purpose of this discussion is to consider why_community class and culture affected the

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Insert Tables 3 and 4 about here

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effective school linkages outlined in Rosenholtz's model of school success. The outcomes of ECE at the child and district level, and the findings

associated with family and community characteristics will not be addressed separately, but will be woven as supporting evidence into the discussion.

These findings are also compared to other related research on the social context of administration, particularly the seminal work by Rosenholtz (1985), Hallinger and Murphy (1986), Teddlie, Wimpelberg, and Stringfield (1989), and Oakes (1989). The findings are compared primarily to this body of work because these authors have provided both original data and theoretical insights which comprehensively captures the research related to community context. The discussion of this exploratory study is necessarily speculative, and thus each section concludes with questions for further consideration. Nonetheless, by more closely examining why ECE reform differed in the communities, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners can begin to consider and further question the impact of communities on educational reform efforts.

Principal Involvement. Neither community culture nor SES affected the degree of principal involvement. The degree of principal involvement did not vary according to the physical proximity of ECE classrooms to the general, elementary education program. Finally, the degree of principal involvement was unrelated to the outcomes of ECE reform at the classroom level.

The uninvolvement of the principals in this study does not support the models introduced by Bossert (1982) and Rosenholtz (1985), research reviews on effective schools (Purkey & Smith, 1983), nor Hallinger and Murphy's (1986) comparisons in low and high SES schools--all of which view the principal as the pivotal agent for all actions shaping student behavior. At the same time, the findings are not incongruent with other research which suggest that

principals are important, but not necessarily the primary catalyst for student outcomes (Dwyer, Lee, Rowan, & Bossert, 1983; Firestone & Wilson, 1985; Oakes, 1989; Teddlie, Wimpelberg, & Stringfield, 1989). "Substitutes for leadership" (Kerr, 1977; Pitner, 1982) and "other than principal" leadership (Burlingame, 1987) accurately characterize the varieties of leadership in schools.

It is not clear, however, from this study, whether it was the age of students, the students' disability, or other factors that led to this blatant lack of principal involvement. Teacher feedback and observations indicated that the principals were much more involved in the supervision, curricula, and coordination of the kindergarten, pre-kindergarten and first grade programs as compared to the ECE services for children with disabilities.

Clearly, research needs to be conducted on "other than principal" behavior in effective schools, be they larger, smaller, elementary, secondary, or higher or lower SES (Teddlie et al., 1989). This research also needs to include schools in nonurban settings. Second, research needs to explore if the degree of principal involvement is universal among students, or if principals or "other than principal" leadership is differentiated among students of differing abilities (e.g., special education or "typical" students), or among students in different grades (e.g., preschool or older elementary).

Expectations for Achievement. The SES differences on expectations for student achievement at the district level is consistent with the research of Hallinger and Murphy (1986) on expectations in schools. Hallinger and Murphy's description of expectations within a high SES setting accurately describes the situation in Lakeview: "[High SES schools] existed in an

environment of very high expectations and actively sought to incorporate those expectations into policies and practices that promoted student achievement. Parents, staff, and students all believed that students would succeed. Success bred success. . . . Staff members were constantly aware of parental pressures for children to succeed. The high visibility of parents in and around the school represented a form of environmental control over internal processes" (1986, p. 350). In contrast, in low SES communities "the social context provides little normative pressure on staff. . .to act in ways that promote student achievement" (p. 349).

Utilizing Bronfenbrenner's model (1976), expectations for student achievement emanated from a number of sources in the school and community other than from the principal. This finding again supports the research on other than principal leadership. These expectations for student achievement varied according to the degree of poverty and degree of population sparsity of the communities (see Figure 3). In Lakeview, all the sources

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Insert Figure 3 about here

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identified in the layers of classroom context at the school, district, and community levels constituted push factors toward effective instruction.

Culturally, expectations for teacher performance definitely differed between the urban and nonurban settings. Although Dover teachers did not perceive a push for academic achievement, higher expectations for student performance did emanate from the district level personnel. In contrast, the

nonurban teachers did not perceive high expectations for student achievement from neither the community, nor persons at the district level.

Previous research has suggested that principals need to buffer their staff from negative community expectations in low SES communities (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986). Hallinger and Murphy went so far as to suggest that "a logical inference from [our] study and other research on social context is that schools should focus some effort on changing the expectations of parents in low-SES communities to reflect a more academic orientation" (1986, p. 352). The results of this study, however, do not support Hallinger and Murphy. This study found that the parents of the target students within the low SES communities had high expectations for student achievement, but these parents did not have the educational confidence, time, or energy to question instructional practices. Parents tended to blame themselves or their children for their child's learning difficulties. In contrast, the Lakeview parents held the school more accountable for student success and actively questioned the instructional process.

One proposition to explain these discrepant findings is that Hallinger and Murphy did not collect any data directly from parents in low SES communities and instead, based their claims and their subsequent suggestions for practice from secondary sources such as teachers' perceptions. Perhaps, teachers' perceptions of low parental expectations reflect a class bias, resulting in an inaccurate view of parental values.

An alternative explanation for the inconsistent findings is that researchers sometimes do not investigate possible differences between the school "community" and "families" of students in the community. The most

recent demographic evidence suggests that the majority of community members in a school district are not parents of students in school (Levin, 1989). Hallinger and Murphy's findings may reflect community values but may not be indicative of the expectations of students' families. Research has not yet determined if "communities" and "families" of students differentially impact on leadership behavior.

Oakes (1989) acknowledged the importance of press for achievement as a social context indicator, and academic expectations for students is one aspect of this press for achievement. More research needs to be done to determine more specifically the present and future expectations (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986; Teddlie, Falkowski, Stringfield, Desselle, & Garvue, 1984) for both student and teacher performance held by the community, parents, school administration, and teachers. Research needs to determine if expectations for student achievement varies not only on the basis of race and socioeconomic class (Oakes, 1989) but also in terms of grade level and student label (e.g., "at-risk," "mildly handicapped"). This data needs to be collected from the primary source of those expectations.

Consensus on Goals of Achievement. All effective schools don't necessarily have the same goals. Hallinger and Murphy found that effective low SES schools emphasized basic skills while effective schools in high SES communities emphasized "broader intellectual and social goals" (1986, p. 338). Rosenholtz (1985) also described goal differences between elementary and secondary schools.

The multiplicity of goals related to class and culture are consistent with other research on goal consensus. For example, Rosenholtz argues that

"desegregated elementary schools. . . have more diversified objectives. . ." (1985, p. 381). She goes on to suggest that "goals of competing importance decrease the likelihood that consensus about their priority will develop. Principal and teacher behavior then become less unitary in purpose" (p. 381).

Differing grade levels, class, and cultural needs challenge goal consensus in schools. Goal displacement can also mitigate against goal consensus. In less effective schools, the goal of "maintaining order" displaces goals of academic achievement (Rosenholtz, 1985). In this study, goal displacement occurred in the low SES school districts. Goal displacement, however, was one in which the goal of compliance to state regulations displaced the goal of academic achievement for the students. Administrators' time was consumed by the inundation of compliance reports and paper work associated with special education.

Consensus on goals of achievement, whether they be focused on basic skills or broader areas of instruction (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986), may be necessary but insufficient for student success. Hallinger and Murphy contended that the principals in effective schools located in low SES communities maintain an "island of excellence" and attempt to buffer the staff and students from the lower expectations for achievement found in the community. The effective schools research has also ignored cultural aspects of student backgrounds in its recommendations for shaping the school climate and coordinating the instructional organization to impact on student learning (Bossert et al., 1982). This study suggests that in communities with great cultural diversity, administrative and/or school isolation from the community negated attempts to implement effective school practices. For example, despite the

Dover superintendent's focus on effective school practices, he ignored the cultural needs of the students--which subsequently lead to his dismissal.

Capper considered the role of community culture in a study that examined the reciprocal exchange between poor, rural communities, school leader behavior, and early childhood services for children with special needs. Capper suggested that the principal and teachers need to consider the language, history, and culture of the rural community and of the students, as mediating points between the school climate and the instructional organization (see Figure 3).

Insert Figure 4 about here

Research needs to explore how the cultures of students and of the community are addressed, and when the school and district takes a "drawbridge" approach with the community. Also, previous research needs to consider how the cultural congruence of administrators' personal background to their school communities influences their behavior. The role of the community membership of administrators is further considered below.

Principal Action: Teacher Recruitment and Retention. Among several others, Rosenholtz (1985) has argued that community class of a school district can affect a district's ability to attract and recruit the most qualified personnel and to provide relevant staff development opportunities.
In the same vein, urban/nonurban cultural differences can exist irrespective of class. Simply in terms of numbers, there has been and continues to be a shortage of special education teaching personnel, and an even greater shortage

of related services personnel such as speech therapists, particularly in nonurban areas (Capper, 1990). Administrators in larger, metropolitan settings have the luxury of recruiting personnel who share their philosophy and their goals for education and, in turn, retaining those who will assist them in meeting their objectives (Rosenholtz, 1985). Administrators in smaller, urban, minority communities, and those in rural and culturally diverse settings do not share in these same amenities. Supported by the research on rural special education (Helge, 1984), the ruralness of the districts in Prairieville, Green Hills, and Deerfield could compound the effects of class due to an even greater difficulty in recruiting competent staff to communities that offer fewer social inducements and to schools that provide more cultural challenges with less educational prestige (see Metz, 1989).

While the findings on recruitment and retention were inconsistent in all the communities, the data could be interpreted as predictable, based on community stability and the history of personnel in the communities. The recruitment/retention of teachers and administrators was difficult in Dover, owing possibly to its location in a challenging, urban, minority community. In contrast, both community and organizational inducements were favorable in Lakeview, and recruitment and retention was not a problem. The ECE teachers in Prairieville and Deerfield defied the expected rural attrition rates. Although these teachers were not originally from these communities, they each married a community member--which could reduce the possibilities of turnover (Capper, 1988). The Green Hills teacher was in her first year of teaching and

was recruited from another part of the state. She was unsure how long she would continue to teach in that community.

Administrators in Prairieville and Green Hills were native to these regional areas and were enjoying a long tenure within communities considered more stable. In contrast, the administration in Deerfield (which was probably the most unstable community), had been in a constant state of turnover for nearly a decade. During that time, none of the administrators were originally from the local community.

The majority of personnel in Deerfield and Green Hills did not live in the local community, but instead commuted into school each day. Community persons in both settings resented this practice for two reasons. First, administrators were less sensitive to the needs of the community. Second, school personnel in the nonurban settings were usually the highest paid persons employed in the community; therefore, communities suffered economic loss when taxes were paid and when businesses were supported in other communities.

Rosenholtz (1985) limited her discussion of teaching inducements to those originating within the organization. More research needs to be done on the role of community inducements in recruiting and retaining teachers and administrators. Sometimes, the extreme cultural differences of a setting may facilitate the recruitment of personnel, because of the "glamour" associated to working in such a culturally diverse or "Peace Corps" type atmosphere (Capper, 1988). This was why the Deerfield teacher initially accepted her position. In terms of cultural comparisons, Deerfield may have had a slight advantage over Green Hills and Prairieville in this regard. Prairieville,

however, may have had an easier time recruiting personnel because of its higher teacher pay and amenities that were more likely to be available in a small town than in the more rural areas.

Rosenholtz (1985) also highlighted the consequences of employing a teacher who is less competent in an effective school which included teacher transfer or the teacher withholding service. Rosenholtz focused on teacher turnover rather than on the withholding of service, and did not discern the difference between these outcomes in different communities. In rural areas, such as Green Hills or Deerfield, withholding of service may be a more frequent outcome than teacher turnover. This is because teachers and administrators have significantly fewer options for transfer and dismissal than are available in urban areas.

The data in this study suggests that the contribution/inducement ratio may also be a significant factor for highly competent teachers in less effective schools. For example, the teacher in Deerfield had approached her work with great energy and enthusiasm, and had high expectations for her students' achievement. Her contribution to teaching exceeded the school norm. Her teaching approach was an anomaly in the "laid back" culture of the school. Both the organizational and community inducements did not match her contributions. After five years without community or administrative support, her enthusiasm waned. She coped by "withholding service", as described by Rosenholtz (1985), which resulted in very little instructional time for her student. More research needs to be conducted on exemplary teachers and administrators who work in schools located in districts and communities that may offer fewer inducements for quality performance.

Although Rosenholtz (1985) addressed the issue of teacher recruitment and attention, administrator recruitment and retention has been left largely unexplored in the literature. Research related to administrator recruitment and retention, which has considerable class differences is that of administrator succession, particularly for principals (Rowan & Denk, 1984). Rowan and Denk hypothesized that the "parents at . . . low-SES schools may be less active politically with the result that change-oriented leaders would face fewer restrictions on their activities" (p. 21). The affect on student outcomes then is that "students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are more sensitive to variations in school organization (Spady, 1973) and that leadership effects on student outcomes can be larger in lower SES schools" (Rowan & Denk, p. 534).

More research needs to be conducted on superintendent, principal, and teacher succession in a variety of communities, with children of varying ages and abilities. We need to better understand how succession affects the community/school relationship. We also need to understand how multiple administrative turnovers, such as in Deerfield and Dover, affect a district. Teacher succession in ECE programs may have a more considerable effect than turnover in other grades and ability levels because children in ECE usually attend the same classroom program over a period of at least two to three years. During this time the teachers have an opportunity to build rapport with the community, parents, and the children.

Principal Action: Supervision and Assistance. Fewer qualified personnel in economically disadvantaged and culturally diverse districts would suggest a greater need for staff supervision and development. The quandary over who is

to supervise special education teachers--special education administrators or principals--has been a much debated issue (Sage & Burello, 1986). Research on school programs which include students with disabilities in the regular classroom, however, suggests that the principal be responsible for this supervision (Sage & Burello, 1986). The young age of the students also raises question of who should be responsible for the supervision of ECE teachers. Most current K-12 preparation programs for school administrators do not include instructional leadership training for preschool students (Capper, 1989).

In this study it was class, rather than culture, which distinguished staff development practices among districts. The economically disadvantaged districts, rural and urban, did not have as easy access to a major university, or to a major metropolitan school district with staff development opportunities. The low SES districts were also much less able to support attendance at conferences. With fewer qualified personnel living in the communities, obtaining qualified substitutes for staff release time was much more difficult. Finally, staff development is a quality issue, and program quality competed with policy compliance in the low SES settings.

Teacher Collaboration. The degree of personnel collaboration varied according to both class and culture. In terms of culture, the need for fewer staff for the lower incidence of ECE students and the geographic distance between professionals both exacerbated possibilities for interaction in the nonurban districts.

In terms of class differences, the location of the ECE classrooms in proximity to other classrooms facilitated teacher collaboration. For example,

the central location of the ECE program in a Lakeview elementary school provided the most opportunity for interaction as compared to the low SES settings. The findings also indicated that teacher collaboration is determined at least in part, by pedagogical decisions. For example, teaching students skills in multiple environments with a variety of teaching personnel, facilitates generalization of skills (Stainback, Stainback, & Forest, 1989). This lack of expertise in the latest pedagogy for children with special needs which encourages personnel collaboration, hindered staff interaction in the low SES communities.

Rosenholtz (1985) found that teachers in ineffective schools worked in isolation and relied on trial-and-error learning. The work isolation led to relations with students that were more custodial than humanistic. In the same vein, the teacher/student relations in this study were also very different among the settings, on a continuum from Lakeview to Deerfield, which reflected the degree of teacher and student isolation from other school personnel. Rather than custodial and humanistic, the teacher/student relationship in this study could be characterized as one of "babysitting" as opposed to "teaching."

The urban and nonurban cultures were more clearly divisive on this issue, which reflected the more distinctive cultural differences on collaboration. The student in Lakeview was actively engaged in learning tasks related to his IEP nearly every minute of his day. The teachers in Dover and Prairieville provided a less rigid schedule but each child was treated like a student. That is, he was expected to sit in his chair with the other students, respond to questions, listen, and to participate in activities. At the opposite end of the continuum, the teachers and aides in Green Hills and Deerfield often

held the targeted students in their laps. The students were not expected to sit with their classmates, nor were they required to participate in or to complete activities.

The importance of collaboration for school administrators, particularly in developing a consensus on school goals and mission, is simply not addressed in the literature. Culture, urban versus nonurban, was a more powerful determinant for administrator socialization than class. Administrators in the nonrural communities simply had more opportunities to interact with a greater number of administrators who maintained high expectations for student achievement. More research needs to be conducted on the socialization and collaboration of school administrators in a variety of communities and how that affects the development of district and school goals related to achievement.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this article was to explore the influence of class and culture on aspects of leadership and the outcomes of reform, specifically reform in ECE. The findings suggest that some outcomes of ECE, family and community characteristics, and effective school linkages are similar, and other aspects are distinctly different in low and high SES communities and between urban and nonurban cultures. With the exception of two findings, the cultural differences were not clearly dichotomous, and instead, presented themselves along a continuum from affluent, to urban poverty, to small town, to rural, and to Native American communities. The continuum of differences in these settings also reflected a continuum of increasing complexity related to class and culture in the community and within families.

These findings were interpreted by suggesting that the low SES of the communities constituted barriers to principal actions typically found in effective schools, and that a nonurban culture further impeded reform efforts. In Dover, Prairieville, Green Hills, and Deerfield, principals were minimally involved and held low or ambiguous expectations for student achievement. The complexity of community class and culture resulted in multiple school goals, difficulty in staff recruitment and supervision, and lack of teacher collaboration on curriculum decisions. The outcomes for children in the classroom then were loose, sometimes non-existent linkages between teacher directed actions and the achievement of student goals, and a less than meaningful educational experience for the child.

In Lakeview, even without principal leadership, high expectations for student achievement emanated from the superintendent, other school personnel and the community. Without the press of great cultural or socioeconomic needs, along with a steady supply of qualified personnel and resources for staff development, the principal actions of recruitment, and opportunities for teacher collaboration on state-of-the-art pedagogical decisions, shaped the degree of group cohesiveness and teacher collaboration on decision-making, problem solving, and experimentation. From this interaction, which encouraged refinement of teaching skills and the further socialization of high expectations, emerged a tight linkage between teacher directed actions and the achievement of student goals.

Implications for research and practice should be directed in three areas: a) suggestions which can inform both research and reflective practices, b) methodological considerations, and c) theoretical propositions. The

suggestions for research which emanated from the study's discussion are also applicable for reflective practice and are summarized in Table 5.

Insert Table 5 about here

The findings of the study also have important methodological implications for research on school context, specifically in the areas of multilevel units of analysis, community characteristics of the sample, and defining the terms social context and community. The findings and interpretations of this study underscore the importance of multilevel data collecting and analysis (Wimplelberg, et al., 1989). While the same state educational policy was implemented in all the school districts and, at the district level, the outcomes of the policy in program structure appeared relatively similar, policy outcomes at the child level were quite diverse. Limiting interpretations of these findings to the child or classroom level would have rendered a limited view of reform efforts. While acknowledging the methodological difficulties in such research, Wimpelberg and colleagues attest to the utility of multilevel methods: "Research that is sensitive to multilevel effects, in particular the effects of individual practices and adult attitudes on children of varying SES backgrounds within classrooms, can preserve something of the equity impulse and may be a link to stabilizing the middle class population in already socioeconomically integrated public schools. Understanding the allocations of teacher time and material resources among children who enter with differing levels of prior learning is critical

to this issue" (1989, p. 102). Bronfenbrenner's theoretical also supports these multilevel efforts.

A second implication for research is the inclusion of nonurban, and particularly rural communities in future studies. The findings and interpretation clearly suggest that nonurban characteristics impacted on school reform, sometimes uniquely and other times compounding the effects of class. Some researchers have neglected comparative data collection in rural communities (Rosenholtz, 1985), while others have collected this data but failed to include this factor in the analysis or reporting (Hallinger & Murphy, 1986). Researchers also need to clearly define their interpretation of "rural."

Third, researchers who study the social context of schools must precisely define their use of "social context" and differentiate between the particular elements or "layers" of social context being investigated. The model of Bossert and the Far West Lab (1982) evolved to clearly distinguish the differences between institutional and community context (Dwyer et al, 1985). This distinction also unravels the threads of social context more amenable to political interpretations and those that are inherent to the community--the former aligned with institutional context and the latter confined to the community. Wimpelberg and his colleagues drew no boundaries between the institutional and community context, and defined school context to include "such socio-political facets as the socioeconomic background of the students, governance structures that determine local and operational decision-making, grade levels (age of students and curricular program) of the school, and more" (1989, p. 82). Based on the Far West Lab model (1985), community context

would include student SES, and governance structures would illustrate institutional context. Researchers investigating school context must also discern the differences among the other layers of context relative to the child or classroom. Wimpelberg's definition of social context clouds these differences. For example, according to the Far West model, grade levels are a component of instructional organization at the school level.

Finally, researchers must specifically define the term "community" and the sample representing that community (Getzels, 1978). Community subgroups such as student families, government officials, and industry workers all may differentially influence and perceive school reform efforts. Also, the notion of "community" is compounded when, for example, poor students who live in disadvantaged communities attend affluent school districts by virtue of choice and/or desegregation plans.

A final implication of this study for research and practice concerns the theoretical and conceptual frameworks which can inform an understanding of organizational context. The literature reviewed for this investigation failed to suggest conceptual guideposts with the exception of Hallinger and Murphy (1986) who focus on instructional leadership and context and recommend contingency theories of organizational leadership. Because this study found that influences on reform were quite diffuse and independent of actions assumed by one person with traditional position power, it may also be helpful to consider the organizational ecology model, specifically resource dependency (McPherson, Crowson, & Pitner, 1986) to understand the dynamics between organizations and their social context. Resource dependency theory recognizes that organizations are most attentive to environmental elements that provide

the resources important to survival, and that the internal configuration of organizations reflects that organization's "relationship with the larger societal culture" (p. 199). Organizational ecology and resource dependency theory can enlighten our understanding of the influences of community class and culture on leadership and reform. The demographic complexities of child and community needs necessitates theoretical frameworks which do not decontextualize research from the exogenous and endogenous factors surrounding organizational practices.

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Table 1

Selected Site Characteristics

	LAKEVIEW (SUBURBAN AFFLUENT)	DOVER (URBAN POVERTY)	PRAIRIEVILLE (SMALL TOWN)	GREEN HILLS (RURAL POVERTY)	DEERFIELD (NATIVE AMERICAN)
COMMUNITY					
POPULATION	41,298	46,354	5829	566	1,969
% UNEMPLOYMENT	2.7	8.6	6.8	4	12.4
% IN POVERTY	3.9	9.7	6.6	17.2	17.9
% MINORITY	1.6	11.5	.66	0	90.4
MEDIAN EDUC. LEVEL (YEARS)	15.6	12.4	NA	12.4	11.2
AVERAGE FAMILY INCOME	$55,510	$28,873	$16,540	$22,785	$22,837
DISTRICT					
NUMBER OF STUDENTS	6,164	6,820	1,244	812	1,016
% ON FREE/REDUCED LUNCHES	2.6	52.0	16.2	16.7	98.1
% MINORITY	5.2	30.0	.88	0	100.0
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM					
NUMBER OF STUDENTS	560	1,151	150	72	240
% ON FREE/REDUCED LUNCHES	4.1	NA	NA	9.7	92.5
% MINORITY	5.0	36.0	.67	0	100.0
EARLY CHILDHOOD/SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM					
NUMBER OF STUDENTS	30	108	17	14	16
% OF TOTAL SPEC. ED POPULATION	5.4	9.4	11.3	19.4	6.7
% OF FAMILIES ON AFDC	3.3	54.6	58.8	33.3	43.8
% OF SINGLE PARENT FAMILIES	3.3	50.0	35.3	20.0	6.3
% OF STUDENTS FROM FAMILIES WITH BOTH PARENTS UNEMPLOYED	0	4.6	41.2	20.0	31.3
% MINORITY STUDENTS	3.3	36.1	0	0	100.0
EARLY CHILDHOOD/SPECIAL EDUCATION PLACEMENT					
NUMBER OF STUDENTS	30	108	17	14	16
% OF SPEECH/LANGUAGE	0	3.7	58.8	93.3	81.3
% OF LEARNING DISABLED	73.3	66.7	0	0	6.3
% EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED	16.7	3.7	23.5	0	0
% MENTAL RETARDATION	6.7	21.3	11.8	6.7	12.5
% PHYSICALLY IMPAIRED	3.3	2.8	5.9	0	0
% VISUALLY IMPAIRED	0	.9	0	0	0
% HEARING IMPAIRED	0	.9	0	0	0

Table 2

Student Characteristics

	Lakeview	Dover	Prairieville	Green Hills	Deerfield
Race	White	Black	White	White	Native American
Sex	M	M	M	M	M
Disability Characteristics	Down Syndrome	Mentally Handicapped Austistic	Mentally Handicapped	Mentally Handicapped Challanging Behaviors	Down Syndrome
Toilet Trained?	No	No	Yes	No	No
Ambulatory?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Verbal?	No	No	No	No	No

Table 3

The Influence of Class and Culture on Leadership and Reform

	Class Differences?		Cultural Differences?					
	Affluent	Poor	Urban		Nonurban			
	Lakeview	Dover, Prairieville, Green Hills, Deerfield	Lakeview Suburban White White collar	Dover Urban Black Working	Prairieville Small town White Semiskilled	Green Hills Rural White Agricultural	Deerfield Rural Native American Unemployed
Child Level							
"Programs"	No. "Programs" in all districts		No.				
Compliance vs. Quality	Yes, compliance "assumed" and high emphasis on quality in Lakeview		Yes, on a continuum from Lakeview to Deerfield. Increasing emphasis on compliance, decreasing emphasis on quality.				
Day Schedule	No, similar activities in all districts		No.				
Integration With Non-disabled Peers	No, students not integrated in all districts.		No.				
Low Student/ Staff Ratio	No, low ratio in all districts.		No.				
Weekly Allocated Time	Yes, affluent student spent much more time in program.		No.				
Content of Allocated Time	Yes, affluent student had much more instructional time.		Yes, decreasing instructional time on a continuum from Lakeview to Deerfield.				
Location of Instruction	Yes, classroom centrally located in an elementary school in Lakeview.		Yes, but not consistent. Dover and Deerfield classrooms were more isolated. Prairieville and Green Hills were located in wing of elementary school.				
Interaction With Other Professionals	Yes, affluent student interacted with many more professionals.		Yes, based on classroom location and pedagogy. Prairieville student spent more time with professionals.				
Coordination of Activities	Yes, affluent student had a highly coordinated instructional day.		Yes, on a continuum from Lakeview to Deerfield, Green Hills and Deerfield taught the most isolated skills.				
Emphasis on Inter/Inde-pendence	Yes, all activities emphasized this.		Yes, on a continuum from Lakeview to Deerfield, Green Hills and Deerfield had the least emphasis on independence/interdependence.				
Family and Community Characteristics							
Family Interest and Willingness to Support	No, all interested and willing to support.		No.				
Family Involvement	Yes, affluent mother very actively involved.		No.				
Family Needs	Yes, poor families were all survival families.		No.				
Community Opinion on ECE	No, all favorable.		No.				
Community Coordination	No, no central coordination mechanism in all districts.		No.				
Community Needs	Yes, higher rates of unemployment, abuse in poor districts.		Yes, a continuum of differences. Community needs increased from Dover to Deerfield.				
Effective School Linkages							
Principal Involvement	No, uninvolved in all districts.		No.				
Expectations for Achievement	No, principal had low or inappropriate expectations in all districts.		No.				
Goal Consensus	Yes, Lakeview had consensus on goals of achievement.		Yes, between Dover and the nonurban settings. They attended to culture. Dover did not.				
Recruitment and Retention	Yes, Lakeview had no problems with this.		Yes, inconsistent in all districts.				
Supervision	No, virtually non-existent in all districts.		No.				
Staff Development	Yes, affluent district included teachers on planning and provided many opportunities		No.				
Collaboration	Some, Lakeview teachers and students collaborated the most.		Yes, based on classroom location and pedagogy.				

Table 4

Similarities and Differences in Community Class and Culture (Summary)

Similarities in Districts	Class Differences	Cultural Differences
ECE Reform	ECE Reform	ECE Reform
Program structure at the district level	Emphasis on compliance vs. quality	Emphasis on compliance vs. quality
Some activities in the day schedule	Weekly allocated time	-
Lack of interaction with nondisabled peers	Content of allocated time	Content of allocated time
Student staff/ratio	-	*Location of instruction
	Interaction with other professionals	Interaction with other professionals
	Coordination of activities	Coordination of activities
	Emphasis on inter/ independence	Emphasis on inter/ independence
Family/Community Characteristics	**Family/Community Characteristics**	**Family Community Characteristics**
Family interest and willingness to support	Family involvement	-
Family expectations	Family needs	-
Community opinion of ECE	Community needs	Community needs
Lack of community coordination		
Effective School Linkages	**Effective School Linkages**	**Effective School Linkages**
Principal involvement	Goal consensus	Goal consensus
Principal expectations	Recruitment and retention	*Recruitment and retention
Supervision	Staff development	-
	Collaboration	Collaboration

Note * Denotes differences which were not on a continuum from Lakeview to Deerfield.

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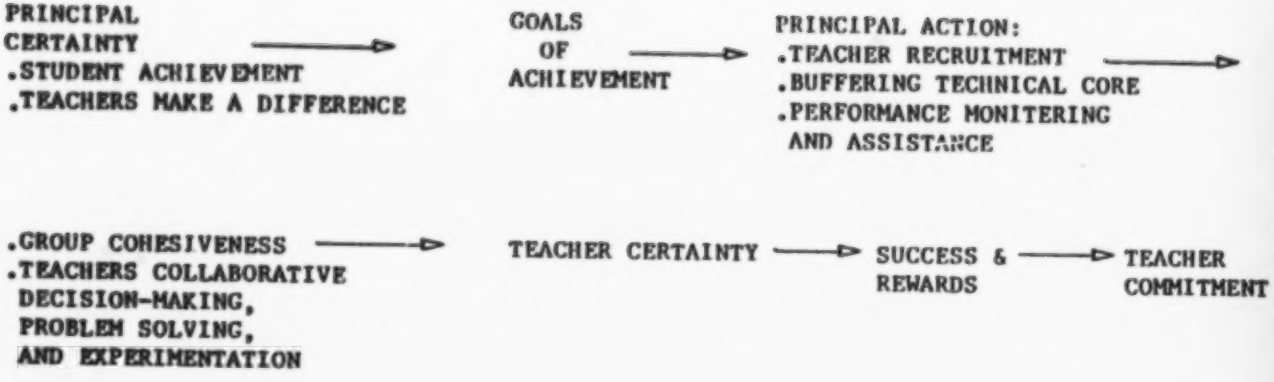
Table 5

Implications For Research and Reflective Practice

The need to consider

1. "Other than principal" influences on school reform efforts
2. How effective school practices are different depending on student subgroups (grade or abilities)
3. Perceptions of community expectations for student achievement versus actual expectations from the community perspective
4. Present and future expectations for student achievement from all levels of school context, and how these expectations vary according to race, class, ability label, and grade
5. How student and community culture are addressed when the principal acts as a buffer with the community
6. How the community role of administrators affects school reform
7. The multiple layers of inducements for teaching and administrating at the school, district, and community levels
8. How succession of school personnel affects the community/school relationship
9. The extent to which school personnel in a variety of communities have access to knowledge and how this impacts on pedagogical practices which in turn, may influence collaboration and expectations
10. The socialization and collaboration of school administrators and how that affects the development of district and school goals related to achievement



ROSENHOLTZ (1985)

Figure Caption

Figure 1. Model of school success.

FIGURE 2 Embedded Contexts (Cole & Griffin, 1987, p. 7)

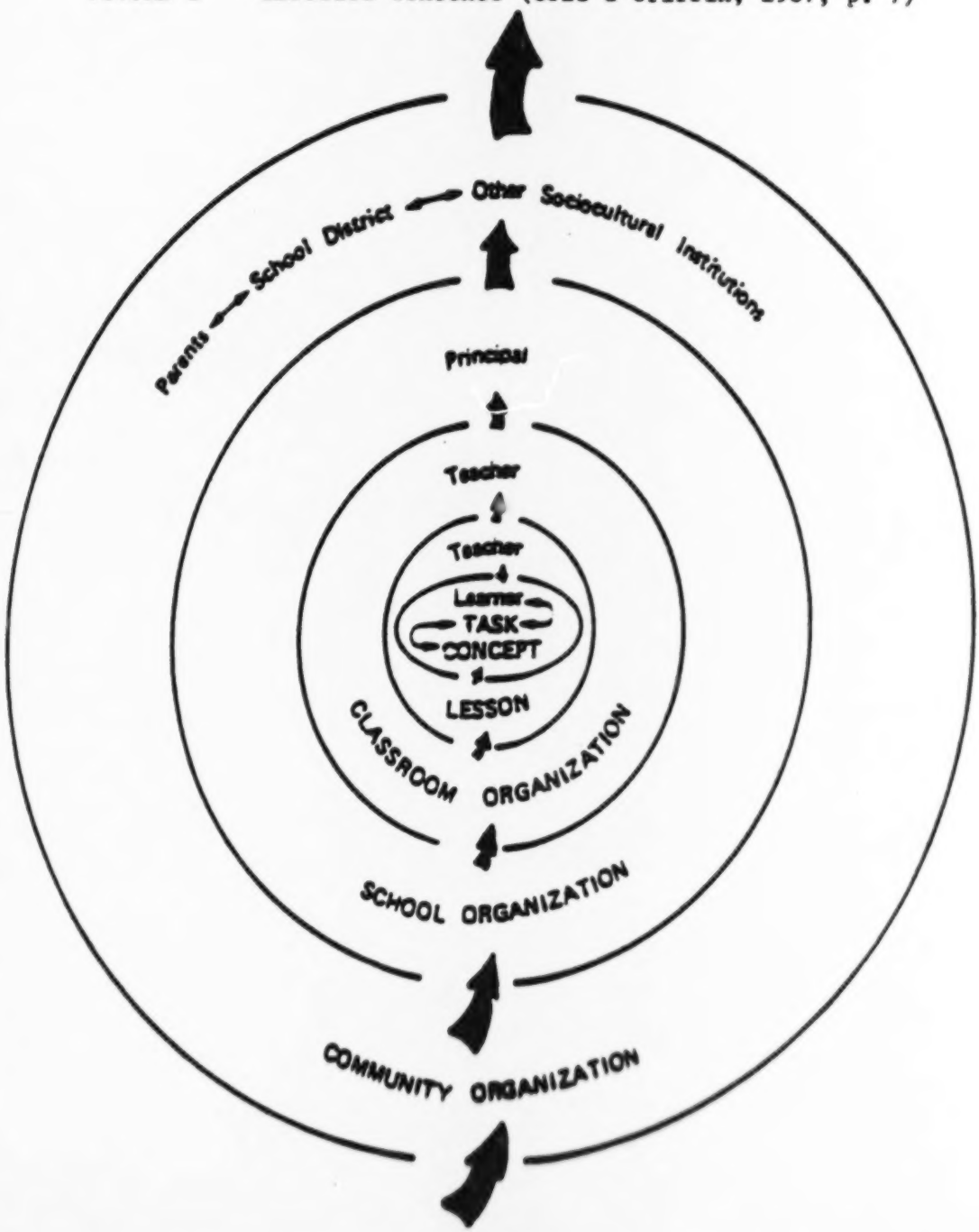
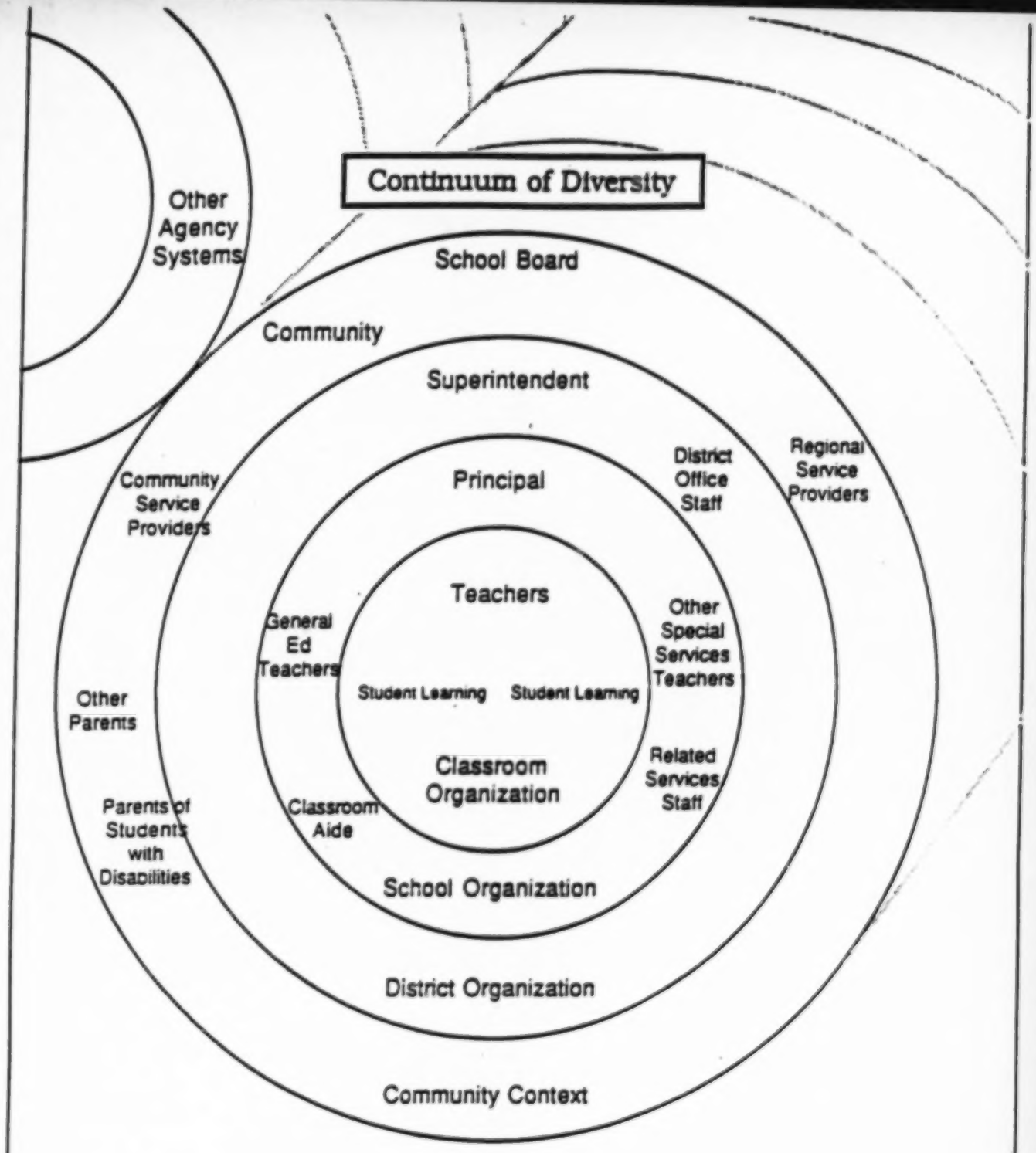


Figure Caption

Figure 2. Ecological context of student learning.

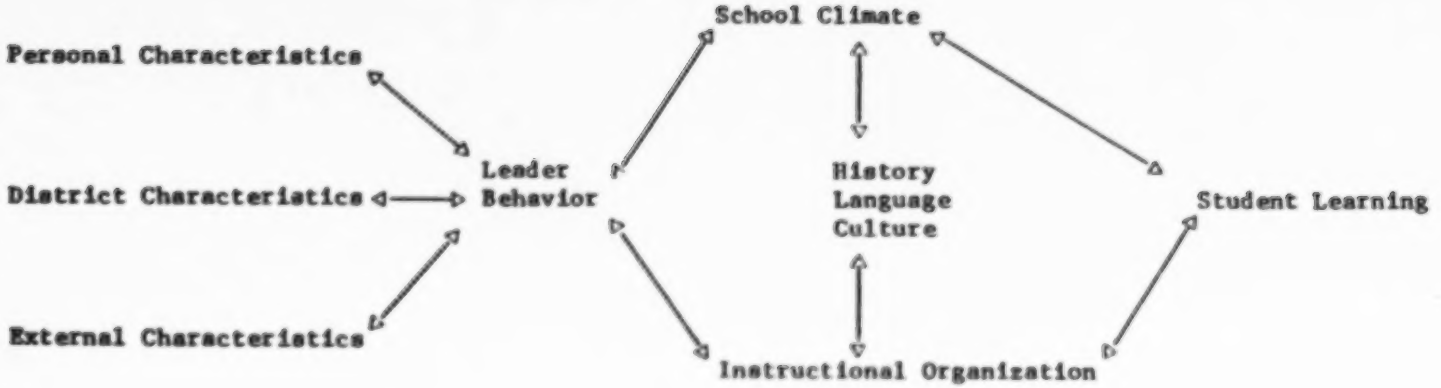


(Figure 3) **Nested Contexts**

Capper, 1989
University of Wisconsin - Madison

Figure Caption

Figure 3. Context of expectations for student achievement.



Capper, 1989
UW-Madison

Figure Caption

Figure 4. An adaptation of the Far West Lab model, incorporating culture.